



Department  
for Transport

From the Parliamentary  
Under Secretary of State  
**Jesse Norman MP**

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To interested parties,

### **Regulation of mobile concrete batching plant – decision on operating weight arrangements**

In December 2017 we announced a number of decisions in relation to mobile concrete batching plant (MCBP, also referred to as volumetric concrete mixers). Their operation will come under the goods vehicle operator licensing regime from 1 September 2018. Compliance with the rules, including with the drivers' hours and tachograph rules, will be enforced by the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency.

We also announced that we would put in place a temporary arrangement in relation to MCBP weights, to permit operation above the standard legal weight limits. This is in recognition of the fact that common practice in recent years has been for MCBP to be operated at higher-than-normal weights. I sought views on the appropriate duration of such an arrangement, with a proposed range of between 7 and 10 years.

We have noted the representations received and that there is a wide spectrum of opinion on this question. Arguments were provided in relation to the cost and average lifecycle strategies relating to these vehicles. Based on the evidence provided, I consider that it is appropriate to institute a temporary weight regime for a period of 10 years. In particular, this will help reduce different impacts on MCBP operators with different fleet management models. The details of the regime, including practical information about how operators can obtain vehicles special orders, is set out in the Annex. Similar arrangements will also be available during this period to operators of mobile concrete pumps.

I also asked for views on the MCBP industry proposal for an amendment to the "special types" rules that would enable MCBP to continue to operate outside standard legal gross vehicle weight limits, but within standard axle weights, in order to maintain similar payloads to current operations.

Having considered the views expressed, I have decided not to progress such an arrangement. Derogations from the standard weight limits are generally permitted exclusively for the carriage of indivisible abnormal loads or equipment. There is no compelling case to permit such a derogation for the carriage of concrete constituents. MCBP operating weights should, at the end of the temporary

arrangement outlined above, converge on the legal weight limits applicable to other heavy goods vehicles.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jesse Norman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J' and a long, sweeping underline.

**Jesse Norman MP**

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Roads, Local Transport and Devolution

## **Annex: Temporary Weight Limits for Mobile Concrete Batching Plant**

The Vehicle Certification Agency (VCA) will issue Vehicle Special Orders (VSOs) for MCBP at the operator's request. VSOs are legal instruments that authorise the road use of a vehicle. The VSO specifies which of the normal regulatory requirements do not apply, and any additional terms and conditions of the use of the vehicle.

### *Weight limits*

The VSOs available to MCBP will provide the following derogations from the standard requirements (all other requirements, including design weights, will continue to apply):

- In place of the usual gross vehicle weights specified in Schedule 1 (parts I and II) to the Road Vehicles (Authorised Weight) Regulations 1998 ("AWR")<sup>1</sup>, the following gross weight limits will apply to the relevant MCBP design configuration. For all other design configurations, the usual AWR requirements will apply.
  - 2-axle rigid: 21.6 tonnes
  - 3-axle rigid: 31 tonnes
  - 4-axle rigid: 38.4 tonnes
  - 5-axle rigid (or more than 5-axle rigid): 44 tonnes
- The gross weight must also not exceed 6 tonnes per metre of the front-rear axle distance.
- Schedule 3 to the AWR (axle weight limits) shall not apply. However, axle weights shall not exceed the limits set out in Schedule 3 by more than a factor of 20%.

### *Duration*

- The VSOs will be applicable for a given vehicle until the earlier of:
  - 31 March 2028; and
  - The 12th anniversary of a vehicle's first registration.

### *Application process*

Operators will need to contact the Vehicle Certification Agency to obtain VSOs for their vehicles.

For the avoidance of doubt, vehicles without applicable VSOs will be subject to the standard AWR weight limits. The standard processing time is ten days from receipt of correct information. However, this cannot be guaranteed, especially in the case of a high volume of concurrent applications, so it is recommended to apply as early as possible. We would expect initial applications to be made by the end of June.

All applications to subsequently add newly registered vehicles to the operator's VSO must be made by the end of 2018. After this point, newly registered vehicles will not

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<sup>1</sup> Here and elsewhere, to be understood as referring alternatively to the equivalent provisions in the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 (as amended).

be eligible to operate under VSOs and will therefore be subject to the standard AWR weight limits.

Whilst we have been finalising the VSO arrangements MCBP have not been subject to plating requirements when they have been presented for goods vehicle testing. Vehicles to which a VSO applies will continue to be exempt from plating (since the non-standard weight limits are specified on the VSO). From 1 September 2018, MCBP to which a VSO does not apply will be subject to plating when they are presented for goods vehicle testing.

VSOs will be issued on a per operator basis, covering the relevant vehicles in that operator's fleet. To apply for a VSO, please send an email to [Michael.hepworth@vca.gov.uk](mailto:Michael.hepworth@vca.gov.uk), marking the application as in relation to mobile concrete batching plant, with the following items of information for each of the vehicles in your fleet to which you wish the VSO to apply:

- Vehicle Make
- Vehicle Model
- Registration Number
- Vehicle Identification Number
- Number of axles

#### Note on operator licensing

If you need to apply for an operator's licence as a result of the legal change you should visit [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/traffic-commissioners](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/traffic-commissioners) for details on how to submit an application. Once your application has been submitted you should email the Office of the Traffic Commissioner (OTC) at [operatorlicensing@otc.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:operatorlicensing@otc.gsi.gov.uk) and explain that you have submitted an application as a result of the new requirements for mobile concrete batching plant. When emailing, you will need to give the name of the applicant and the reference number that is supplied when the application has been submitted. The OTC can then ensure that the application is then considered by the appropriate traffic commissioner